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# MISSION

JUNE 1978

## Singing Before the Lord: What Are Kids Like Ours Doing in Music Like This?

By TRUMAN SPRING, JR.

The echo of eight thousand pairs of clapping hands bounced off the veteran walls of the Tarrant County Convention Center. It was another concert night at TCCC, and if those walls could talk, they would tell much about the human condition based on the way a cross-section of humanity behaves in the presence of the contemporary American hero, the concert musician. (Continued on p. 3)



# THE MARGINS

Some of you will receive this issue in time for the annual *Mission* seminar, to which you were invited in the last issue. As announced then, it will be at 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 16, at the Central Church of Christ in Irving, Texas, a northwestern suburb of Dallas. We're at 1710 West Airport Freeway. The program will deal with the tension between form and freedom, structure and spontaneity, in the life of the church. Dr. Jim Reynolds will speak on the role of spontaneity, and Dr. George Cooper on the need for form. The audience will be invited to participate. We hope you can join us.

A tragic accident near us May 21 made national headlines. The roof of the Walnut Village Church of Christ in Garland caved in under the weight of accumulated water, killing a nine-year-old girl and hurting more than fifty others. The ugly scene has been brightened somewhat by community response such as that of radio station KPBC, which launched a fund-raising promotion to help with medical bills or other needs.

KPBC is a "Christian" station. While recent commercial opportunists ("Christian Yellow Pages," etc.) have thrown into question that sort of label, an interesting bit of background helps legitimate KPBC's claim. Not many months ago, a well-known Church of Christ minister was interviewed on the station's popular talk show. He managed to express doubt that anyone but those in the Church of Christ would be saved. In fact, rightly or wrongly, some felt he was saying that one had to be immersed by a Church of Christ minister in order to really be sure.

Now comes the Walnut Village tragedy. The pagan reaction would have been to recall the earlier affront and ignore the need. The Christian reaction, of course, would be to do good to those that say all manner of things against you falsely. We are grateful that Radio Station KPBC chose the latter course, demonstrating to the Churches of Christ how to be Christian. Thanks . . . we needed that.

*Rd*

# MISSION

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 12, JUNE 1978

TO EXPLORE THOROUGHLY THE SCRIPTURES AND THEIR MEANING . . . TO UNDERSTAND AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE THE WORLD IN WHICH THE CHURCH LIVES AND HAS HER MISSION . . . TO PROVIDE A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNICATING THE MEANING OF GOD'S WORD TO OUR CONTEMPORARY WORLD."

—EDITORIAL POLICY STATEMENT, JULY, 1967

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# Singing Before the Lord...

(Continued from p. 1)

Tonight, however, things were quite different. This was a Christian music concert. The artists were two of that field's tops—Reba Rambo and Andrae Crouch and the Disciples. Sounds of “Praise the Lord!” and “Thank you, Jesus!” filled the air as Reba, then Andrae, mixed worshipful, hortatory and evangelistic lyrics with a sound ranging from progressive country to hard hitting contemporary and soul. “Church” was happening, and while the worship was mainly vertical, even a spirit of fellowship among multi-labeled believers came to pass.

But Christian music of today is being accepted very slowly or ignored in our non-instrumental churches. Some object that Christians with these professionally produced concerts are once again following, rather than leading, society. Christian musicians retort that method and the vehicle for our message must adapt to the times. Others of us feel uncomfortable because Christian music today is just too exciting. We feel that to be pious is to be low key.

Yet, surprisingly, several Church of Christ young people are active in contemporary gospel music, and there is almost nothing low key about it. To list all of these is impossible (maybe if I lived in Nashville it'd be easier), but these names stand out: *Chris Christian*, whose singing talent has kept him in the thick of the Nashville music scene for several years, producing albums for folks like B. J. Thomas, the Grammy-winning Imperials, as well as a major album featuring his own vocal gift; *Gary S. Paxton*, who won nothing less than last year's Grammy for a religious album; the *Boone* sisters, including Debby, of whom we'll be hearing much, much more; and the two groups on whom this article will focus—*Dogwood* and *Fireworks*.

Imagine how we C of C'ers were surprised (some positively and some negatively, no doubt) when Word, Inc., of Waco—the largest producer of Christian music of any genre—recently named as its contemporary selection of the month two C of C-related groups! The feature was a two-sided

package with Dogwood's latest album, “Out in the Open,” and Fireworks' debut album entitled simply “Fireworks.”

## Where Did They Go Wrong?

How did kids with non-instrumental Church of Christ connections wind up at the top of the contemporary Christian music charts? Dogwood, made up of Steve Chapman and Ron Elder, has been making music since 1974. Actually, while Steve and Ron and their families are members of the Belmont Church of Christ in Nashville, both were raised in the Church of God, where their fathers still minister. In 1974 Ron and Steve visited Nashville's Koinonia Coffeehouse, a ministry of the Belmont church—and renewed their commitment to Christ. They also entered into a Christian musical ministry. “After the Flood—Before the Fire” was their first album, followed by the excellent work “Love Note.” *Free Love* magazine called “Love Note” a “real progression for the group. . . an album that rises above the commonplace country gospel/Jesus Music genre to provide a real ministry.”

How has Dogwood been received in Restoration churches? Steve Chapman says “very well” in the limited number of congregations (mostly in Texas) where they have played. “Folks in the Church of Christ aren't ‘sung out,’ ” reports Steve. “In many other denominations they've had every other Christian artist there ahead of you.” Dogwood has had little contact with any Christian Churches, and because of the Koinonia ministry across the street from the Belmont church building where they and countless Christian groups sing every week, they haven't played at Belmont in Nashville.

How does Dogwood view the prohibition of instruments in Church of Christ worship? That may be colored by their background where, according to Steve, every kind of instrument from “spoons to washtubs” were used. The first time Ron and Steve heard “Amazing Grace” sung at Belmont, they were impressed by the “purity of vocal music” and really “heard that great hymn for the first time.” Comments like that should warm the dark recesses of any *a cappella* heart. But before we get too comfortable with that nice stroke, Dogwood would also say that total exclusion of instruments is bad, too. “Music is a God-given gift,” the young brothers testify.

The situation with Fireworks is different. All of the group except one back-up musician is a member

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of the Church of Christ. Two of the vocalists have grown up in the church and are former Abilene Christian University students. Fireworks consists of Marty McCall, Gary Pigg, and Cindy Lipford (vocalists); Lanny Avery (drums); Chris Harris (bass); and Mark Christian (lead guitar). The group was born last year, although Cindy—who replaced Gwen Moore, vocalist on the debut album—and Mark joined the group this spring.

When I shared with Cindy the comment made by Dogwood about the “purity of vocal music,” her response was that she had been blessed by the “purity of instruments.” The group unanimously respects the Church of Christ doctrine about the non-use of instruments, however. Cindy reports that they have had no concerts in Churches of Christ, but hope to later this year.

Gary, who, with Cindy, was a member of ACU’s “Hilltoppers,” said, “We see fellowship beyond denominational lines now, and even beyond that—beyond cultural and prejudicial lines. Our views of fellowship are definitely expanded.” Labels do not a Christian make, only the lordship of Christ.

#### What Are They Sayin’?

Something is happening in Christian music today, and happening fast. Some of us may have thought that we would be forever throwing out the

lifeline, bringing in the sheaves, peeling out the watchword, and resolving no longer to linger. For us, the lyrics being written today (and, alas, creeping into our worship) might bring a jolt.

Generally, lyrics being written by people like Marty McCall, Steve Chapman, and Ron Elder center around two themes: unbounded praise to the Lord, and real everyday life as a follower of Jesus.

Dogwood seeks to share their interpretation of the influence of Jesus upon their lives, and the way in which he has brought them back into the flock. They draw on their real-life experiences to illustrate their “walk with Jesus through the earth.” Note this excerpt concerning something we may deal with each day, but have never sung about in Sunday morning church:

Now I don’t think it’s right  
To be with you tonight.  
I’ve found something better than cheating,  
It’s being true.  
You got the want to  
And I got the can’t do.  
I got a wife and you gotta go.  
... But the Lord knows I am weak  
And in my weakness He can be strong.  
Now do you know there’s life in the way  
I’m turning you down.\*

As mentioned, many of the songs focus on praise, like the lines from this song which sometimes has caused controversy in church performances:

... When He makes you so happy you don’t  
know what to do  
Go ahead and dance it’s alright.  
It’s old, it’s good, it’s pure, you should.  
Do it before the Lord.  
(From “Go Ahead and Dance.”)

Most of Dogwood’s songs are “down home” both in message and style. One of the most popular songs on their latest album deals with husband-wife communication:

I said, “What have I done to make you feel so bad?”  
She said, “Nothin’.”  
I said, “That’s not true, tell me what have I done to you?”  
She said, “It’s nothin’ you’ve done, it’s some-  
thin’ you didn’t do!”  
She said, “I need your snuggles,  
The day’s a struggle without them.  
When we miss those times I seem to feel alone.  
When I can remember you warm on a chilly  
morning



‘DOGWOOD’—Steve Chapman and Ron Elder

\* From “Be on Your Way.” This and all following Dogwood quotations are copyright 1977, by Monk & Tid Music, and used by permission.





**'FIREWORKS'—(from left) Mark Christian, Lanny Avery, Marty McCall, Chris Harris, Cindy Lipford, and Gary Pigg.**

It helps me think of you through the day.  
And when you're on my mind you know every-  
thing's OK."

(From "Snuggles.")

Much contemporary Christian music is rephrased Scripture or stories directly from the Bible. From this "Out in the Open" album comes songs like "You'll Be There," which is Psalm 139 rephrased. The story of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego appears in "Remember the Rebels." And Jesus' teaching about reconciling with your brother in Matthew 5:23-24 is recalled in "Bitter Persuasion":

Is there someone in the world  
You cannot love?  
A wrong has been done  
And it's been too long since you rested.  
And everytime you hear their name  
Or see their haunting face  
Does your peace go away  
And pain take its place?  
It's a bitter persuasion but the end is so sweet,  
Go find your brother and wash his feet.  
Jesus forgave you before you knew you were

sorry.

Go and do the same and the healing will flow.  
(From "Bitter Persuasion.")

One of the most moving songs on the album is a lyrical adaptation of Calvin Miller's book, *The Singer*. The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is depicted as a street encounter between a used and abused woman and the singer. When he asks her how she learned the song she was quietly singing, she answers, "From the first man to whom I was sold." He convinces her that she has learned a song not of a lover, but of the hater. Then:

You need to learn the true song of love,  
I know it, if you'll listen I'll sing it to you. . . .  
Then He touched her on the shoulder  
And said, "Just ahead of you is all of the joy for  
which you have waited  
If you'll learn the tune."  
Then He left her in the street and as he walked  
away  
He heard someone ask her, "Do you sell love?"  
She said, "No, I simply owe love everything."  
(From "The Singer.")

Dogwood's special gift is creating down-home

stories and tunes tightly squeezed into an upbeat tempo. And Dogwood ministers to the Body of Christ.

Fireworks' sound is much different. Featuring tightly-knit, intense vocals and an electric sound, the contemporary upbeat music of this young group revolves around the realistic experiences of everyday Christian people. Marty McCall's creative genius is of growing reputation in Nashville. He wrote all the music and lyrics of this debut album, assisted by Gary Pigg on one song entitled "Maybe It's Love," featuring questions to the disciple:

Maybe it's your money, or maybe it's the lack of it.  
Maybe it's your marriage, or maybe it's the lies in it.  
Or maybe it's love, or maybe it's the lack of it.  
Maybe it's love, or maybe what's in back of it  
Things about yourself you know.  
You wonder how you can begin to grow.

Comes the answer:

Well, maybe you can learn how to use it,  
Then maybe you can learn how to lose it.  
With Jesus in the middle  
Solution to the riddle  
Oh, the cross you bear can be your way there.  
(From "Maybe It's Love")

Obedience, trust, and the battle between darkness and light all find their way into the message of Fireworks. Again, an everyday application is characteristic:

How can you begin to tell me  
Everything that comes to your mind  
When you know how so much of what you  
tell me  
Sneaks around from behind?  
Everybody can lie  
Anybody knows how to close their eyes.  
Yes, everybody can choose to die.  
(From "Carrying On.")

Marty says, "The love of Jesus, our power over the forces of darkness, and a positive statement of our position as victorious conquerors is what our music is about. Yet, we deal with the reality of where young Christians are—in transition, in progress, with pains and problems."

How can I know that you'd forgive me  
How can I believe that you'd receive me?  
How can I know the way, know the way,  
Oh, how can I know?  
(From "Forever With You.")

In this first album Gwen Moore sings beautifully:

I used to have these talks with my father  
The best ones over the wine.  
The blood red would free us, so that we could

be us  
And help everything turn out fine.  
Holy blood of Jesus  
Spirit gently seize us.  
Brightly light the paths of night  
And draw our hearts to oneness.  
... I still have these talks with my Father  
The best ones over the new wine.  
The blood it frees me, so that He can see me  
And help everything turn out fine.  
(From "Talks With My Father.")

An up-to-date relevance is the most appealing factor of contemporary Christian music and lyrics:

I've never been in the gutter  
But I've walked along the street.  
You've heard the sounds, you've seen the people there  
You've seen the sidewalk defeats.  
You're in the presence of the Lord  
And the Spirit begins to move.  
... You can hear the rushing sound  
See the tongues of fire  
And you know, and you know, and you know,  
He's all around.

(From "Presence of the Lord.")

At times, the musical style of Fireworks reminded me of tunes from my worn-out "Jesus Christ Superstar" records. "We don't mind hitting strong notes, getting loud, or playing driving music," continues Marty. "Our musical message is dramatic and gutsy."

### What About It?

The Scriptures tell us to make a joyful sound to the Lord. Our oft-quoted proof-text regarding non-instrumental music has much more depth than we allow it:

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:18-20).

The ministry of music has been belittled in Churches of Christ. Your observation is certainly as good as mine for the reasons why. But the solution, at least in part, is to incorporate into our worship songs with current terminology and sound, whether that sound is bluegrass, pop, progressive country, or whatever. Those who are in a position to do so should inform Christians about the richness of Christian music today. Musical groups could be invited to share their ministries with our local churches.

Let's sing before the Lord and bless Him and ourselves through the beautiful gift of music.

†

# On Treating the Parson Like a Person

By ROBERT MEYERS

Despite their conflict of interests, the devil and the preacher have certain things in common. Both are acknowledged to hold some queer kind of power over their own flocks, although neither would win the average man's vote as a fishing partner. Both are used to frighten small children into good behavior—the one because he manages hell, the other because he can manage to raise it from the pulpit if properly stimulated. It is likely that the great Antagonist is lonely; it is certain that most preachers are, longing desperately to be human beings.

Because, before a man becomes a minister, he is a human being first. If, after he becomes a minister, no one will let him continue to be a human being, he is in deep trouble. All sorts of reasons are given why ministers have breakdowns or leave the pulpit; but none is more compelling than the conflict between the role a minister is expected by the church to play out, and the kind of life he wants to live as a human being.

Church members have a stereotype of the minister. With slow, unrelenting pressure, they insist that their man fit it. He is obliged to be two persons: the man he really is, and the man his congregation expects him to be. The tension created by this duality can become too much to bear, in which case he leaves, or, in rare cases, takes his life. Often he does what may be worse than either: he plays the role until finally he no longer knows the difference between his true self and the man who

has been fashioned by the expectations of others.

People adopt for the preacher a special manner. They use a special vocabulary and speak it from a careful mouth. Most men, at least in moments of strong emotion, pepper their talk with vivid slang; but for the preacher they “dress up” their conversation. Responding to these artificial poses, the preacher slowly takes on a special face of his own.

For one thing, he smiles. Oh, how he smiles! His voice is sweetly pious, his eyes are luminous with holy interest in the most mundane happenings. He avoids like the plague anything that smacks of honest maleness. . . and he smiles. It can be a frightful strain, since almost no one smiles constantly except men paid to do so. Permanent muscles develop, the smile gets fixed. And the more it hardens, the less likely it becomes that a genuine human being behind it somewhere will ever find his way out again.

I am convinced that in an extraordinary number of ministers this lost self wants desperately to find its way past the mask, all but screaming aloud at times, “Let me out!” No matter how committed to his calling, the preacher wants to be a person, with all the privileges of a person. He knows himself to be no awesomely, holy man who must be approached as if one trod on holy ground. If here and there some cotton-candy sermonizer, speaking sweet-pink wind, yearns for such idolatry, surely he is rare. Most preachers, to paraphrase Thoreau, lead lives of quiet desperation, hoping for that divine day when some wag will *not* feel compelled to joke: “Ah, we must behave ourselves, boys! Here comes the Parson!”

Emerson had recognized this dilemma over

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*Robert Meyers is preaching minister at the Plymouth Congregational Church in Wichita, Kansas. He is also an English professor at Wichita State University.*



a century ago, and defined it in his American Scholar address:

I have heard it said that the clergy—who are always, more universally than any other class, the scholars of their day—are addressed as women; that the rough, spontaneous conversation of men they do not hear, but only a mincing and diluted speech. They are often virtually disfranchized; and indeed there are advocates for their celibacy.

Many of my preaching friends confess that these words describe perfectly what bothers them most. They are *disfranchized*. The word burns itself into their brains. Cut off, deprived of the life of ordinary men, forced to play out a role which has too much sweetness in it. Doomed, like some salesmen, to link their fortunes with the breadth of their smile, the energy of their handshake, the impeccable blandness of their comments.

On top of that, they must admit also that Emerson's compliment to the superior learning of the clergy is no longer valid. It has been a long time since ministers have been recognized as the scholars of their day. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, professors—all have moved into the intellectual domain once dominated by ministers. To add insult to injury, many of these newcomers view the dispossessed parsons as feebly good fellows who smile unctuously in times of stress and who eat very well from protected troughs.

Who says any more what Washington Irving could say in "The Legend of Sleepy Holly," that the schoolmaster is "inferior in learning only to the parson"? Instead of standing for strenuous mental discipline, the words "parson" and "preacher" now connote one who lives a distinctly unacademic and overly-sheltered life. The bearer of the title is at once the object of mildly pious deference and slightly amused contempt.

When I first read Emerson's comment, years ago in a literature class at the University of Oklahoma, I had already been preaching for more than a decade. His words struck home. I remembered how often I was treated as Victorian ladies were once treated: one made polite and mincing conversation with them at the table, but escaped with unspeakable relief into the smoking room and the virile talk of honest men.

I had already begun to wince when men reached, in a story they were telling me, that point where with others they would have spiced it with some savory expletive, only to catch themselves up short awkwardly and sub-

stitute a pale expression guaranteed safe for ministerial ears. I had spent three years in World War II, lived in army barracks and heard every variety of talk known to the American soldier; but as a minister I had to be shielded from slang, even in the telling of a joke!

Cut off from the world of real people, fed on make-believe speech, the preacher is slowly pushed into a corner and labeled "For Special Occasions Only." If he fights against the disfranchisement, some will say he is bold and lacks spiritual intensity. If he submits, he becomes so colorless that vital men and women find his company boring and avoid him when they can, reserving his services for weddings and funerals where they are either too happy or too stricken to be upset by his enameled smile and practiced condolences.

This is not what most preachers want, at least not at first. They want to be treated as fellow human beings, not as magic balm, speakers of magic, shamans who can charm God into solving all difficulties. They want to say, "We have no wings. We do not think an occasional expletive betrays a corrupted heart; make us feel *normal*!"

Yet this unwanted protection from the honest speech of mankind is only part of the problem. Even worse may be the fellow who cannot wait to *shock* the preacher. He plays without ceasing the role of The Happy Hellion. He is never really naughty enough to offend his own friends, but just spicy enough to make them grin at the preacher's supposed embarrassment.

Seldom is anyone vicious. People are fundamentally decent about religious matters, even when they have decided against the notion that anything of value is to be had from that quarter. They are simply uncomfortable in the presence of preachers and do not know quite what to do. Getting away from one of them is like coming home from church or the symphony, taking off formal dress, and sinking with blessed relief into a favorite recliner.

Most of the ministers I know would like for people to relax and remember that person and function cannot be made identical. Deeply committed to a work they believe is good, they still wish to be treated as human beings and not as witch-doctors. They do not want the suddenly squelched expletive, the hastily hidden cigarette, the quickly managed face. They hope for a distinction between the eternal truth they try to bring, and the common humanity of the carrier. They want to be people, part of the world of real men and women. That gift from their congregation they will treasure above all others. †

# The Spirits in Prison

By FLOYD VIDLER

*Former preaching minister Floyd Vidler now manages  
a drug store in Charleston, West Virginia.*

First, let us take note of this most difficult passage.

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him. . . . For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead, that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God. (1 Pet. 3:18-22; 4:6.)

I

It is hard to be completely objective in dealing with this passage. Protestants especially find it almost impossible to keep from being reactionary in their approach, instinctively protesting the way Roman Catholics have used the passage to support the doctrine of Purgatory.

In the fifth century, Augustine maintained that the passage referred to the historical episode of Noah preaching to those who subsequently perished in the flood. It was the spirit of Christ preaching through the body of Noah. In the sixteenth century, Luther, seeing the tremendous pile of medieval superstitions piled on the text, adopted Augustine's views. Thus, Protestantism has generally followed this line of explanation.

Three thoughts come to mind. (1) What did Christians who lived before Augustine believe? The writer confesses ignorance here; however, they must have believed something and if this view was *begun* by Augustine, the belief of Christians before him must have been different. (2) Luther took this view as a reaction to the teachings concerning Purgatory. Most often reactionary views tend to go to the opposite extreme. (3) The traditional Protestant view forces us to abandon a rather practical rule of interpretation that has served us quite well in other instances: a statement should be taken literally in a literal context, unless there is compelling reason to do otherwise. There is no good reason to abandon this rule in this case. Let us then approach the text with both humility and a lack of dogmatism.

II

As we grapple with this matter we must consider the condition of the dead. Customarily we have divided the dead into two categories—(1) the saved and (2) the lost. For the purpose of our discussion



we need not consider the hopelessly lost—those consigned to hell—for Peter is talking about people for whom gospel preaching is relevant. As for those who have the prospect of salvation, the possibilities are probably much broader than we have thought.

First, consider those who died before Christ came. There are two categories: Jews and non-Jews. We will not consider the Jews for obviously they had a mechanism for being saved—the Law. (We should recall that the blood of Jesus was applied retroactively to save them; it was not a matter of their being saved by human merit or by keeping the Law perfectly—Hebrews 9:15.)

The non-Jews can also be divided into two categories: those we know something about and those we know practically nothing about. We know that God had some dealings with non-Jews (even those who lived before the Jewish nation came into existence).

Several examples come to mind. Melchizedek is called a “priest of God” (Heb. 7:1). He was not a Jew, was outside the family of Abraham, and not connected with the theme concerns of the Bible—yet as a priest of God he mediated God’s case to man (his people) and man’s case to God. Jethro, priest of Midian, was outside the family of Abraham but a priest of God (Exod. 18:1). Thus, clearly God had dealings with the people of Midian.

Balaam is called a prophet of God (2 Pet. 2:16). The fact that he was not always pleasing does not negate the fact of his office. As prophet he “spoke for God” to man—his people—who were outside the Jewish theocracy. The Magi who came to the manger of Jesus were probably Zoroastrian priests. There is abundant evidence that, at the time of Jesus’ birth, God excited the whole Near East with an expectation that a great King should be born in Palestine. Thus, in whatever ways, God was dealing with them. What else he may have done with them we simply cannot say.

**N**ext, Paul mentions some with whom God had some very remote dealings in Romans 1:18-23 and 2:14-16:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were

darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. . . . When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them.

God gave these people very little light. Consequently, he expected very little of them. The great principle is: live in accordance with the light you have. Only God knows the degree of their light. Only God knows how well they walked in that light—but some obviously succeeded in pleasing God.

**F**rom these considerations, it seems clear that many people living before Christ—outside the Jew’s revelation, and in a very inferior light—did, in fact, walk according to the light they had. Thus they were saved—the blood of Christ was retroactively applied to them. They passed into Hades and found themselves in comfort. Hades is simply the realm of the dead—prior to judgment—in which the pleasing are comforted and the displeasing are “in torment in this flame” (Lk. 16). (This is another subject and cannot be treated in this paper.) The reason for this comfort (their relationship with God) would not be apparent. I personally see no problem of any kind in understanding that Christ—when he went to Hades (Acts 2:31)—proclaimed to them the good news of his work as the cause of their state. Thus Christ would fully enlighten what had, up to that point, been so shadowy—or completely blank—before.

This statement, therefore, seems appropriate:

The promise to the penitent thief was not a promise to one; it was a promise to all who had gone before Christ and desired to know Him, who had died in His faith, in His love, but without sight of him;—it was a promise to all of them, that on that day He would bring rest and satisfaction to them. So we can think of Christ going there among the dead, from Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, down to Isaiah and Micah, and John the Baptist—to all those who had been hungering for Him, expecting and longing for Him, to the souls of the great heathen, longing for they knew not what, but surely finding at last their satisfaction in Him. (*The Great Texts of the Bible*, vol. 19, p. 125.)

The expression “judgement according to men” (1 Pet. 4:6) does not appear to be equal to “the final judgment.” Let us consider an example. Were *all* the Jews who were destroyed during the forty years of wilderness wandering consigned to hell? I



think not—if so, Moses was consigned to hell. *The Pulpit Commentary*, addressing this problem, says that, like the people of Noah's time—

They had been overtaken, not by death in the ordinary way; but in the interest of humanity, it had been considered that they should be swept from the face of the earth. This judgement according to man was not one with the final judgement on them. To them, after they had been judged thus on earth, in Hades the gospel was preached.

### III

Next let us consider those who have died since Christ came in the flesh. Again we have two categories. First, there are those who have known him (or to whom the gospel has been preached). For the purposes of this study, we need not consider these. Second, we have those who have never heard of him (the vast majority of the world's population). These people have not heard of Jesus through no fault of their own. Among this group there are two categories: (1) those who are not concerned with the higher life (frankly, I see no hope for these); (2) those who are walking according to whatever light they have—but who, through no fault of their own, have never heard of Jesus.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it poses no problem to me to envision some situation similar to that already considered for "light seekers"

before Christ and outside the Jew's religion—involving the preaching of the gospel to them in Hades.

### IV

This interpretation recommends itself to me for these reasons:

(1) It does not force us to abandon sound rules of interpretation and try to make "dead" not mean "dead."

(2) It does not bring us into conflict with any other point of scriptural teaching. There is no hint of a "second chance" here—it is a first chance for all. This interpretation is not burdened by any of the medieval superstitions of a Purgatory where man could, by the meritorious value of his own suffering, eventually pay for his own sins and achieve eternal life.

(3) Nor does this in any way release us from the responsibility of being ambassadors for Christ. The principle of Ezekiel 3:16-18 clearly places the burden on our shoulders to be ambassadors, regardless of the fact that we may not get around to everyone. The benefits of Christianity are not all in eternity. We cannot be loving disciples of a God whose other name is Love, and fail to share the blessings of here and now with all God's other children-by-creation.

(4) It appears to do more than other views to uphold the overall character of God. It does not make God into a fiend, but, at the same time, his justice is vindicated. †



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# In Memoriam:

O. H. TALLMAN (1916 — 1978)

By HANS ROLLMANN

In the early hours of April 22, in Lewiston, New York, O. H. Tallman and his wife Barbara were the victims of a head-on collision. A few hours later both died in a nearby hospital without regaining consciousness.

"O. H." (only a handful of insiders knew his entire name) was one of those rare individuals whose personal association left an indelible impression upon nearly everyone who had the privilege of meeting him. His humble yet certain character, his erudition without pretense, his genuine humanity, were engaging and had drawn me and numerous others to him. When I learned of his death, I felt a deep personal loss. Since quite a few in *Mission's* reading audience have come to know O. H. over the years, I asked the editor to print this memorial and an article written by O. H. in 1960 while ministering to the Central Church of Christ in New York City.

Who was this man? In 1916 O. H. was born on a farm in Canada into the fourth generation of Church of Christ members. His father was a Church of Christ minister, and very early in his life O. H. felt called to follow in his father's footsteps. In 1935 he entered Abilene Christian College, where his studies and social relationships made his stay, as he described it later, "one of the finest experiences I have known."

After leaving Abilene in 1938, he began preaching in the country church in Canada where his father had labored before him. Ministries in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Niagara Falls, New York, followed. In 1947 O. H. continued his studies at Pepperdine University, and during the two years he stayed there he preached for the church in Arcadia. A brief but spiritually rewarding ministry in Bradford, Pennsylvania, followed, and for six summers he served as director of Christian Heights Camp in Little Valley, New York.

In 1950 O. H. moved to New York City to begin a ministry with the Manhattan congregation. His prophetic message on the first day of his service that he intended "to be a disturbing influence" came to be fulfilled in due time. His ecumenical spirit and inquiring mind explored with the congregation a Christian way relevant to modern man and honest in its relationship with others. He felt that the narrow boundaries which limited Christianity to the historical successors of the Campbell-Stone movement were divisive and "unworthy of God."

O. H.'s spiritual search, however, occurred at a time when ecumenical consciousness and reflective self-examination among Churches of Christ were at an all-time low. In the summer of 1954 he was dismissed from his ministerial position, charged with doctrinal unsoundness for expressing

views similar to those in the following article. In an autobiographical sketch, reflecting on the events, O. H. describes his one great passion with these words: "Possibly I possess only one unusual characteristic, and that is the folly to speak any truth whether popular or not when I believe it is needed. My wisdom is limited and my judgment faulty, but the world needs truth, even the little that I can speak."

The majority of the congregation felt that the charges against O. H. were unjustified and had faith in his Christian convictions and the validity of his message. They formed a new congregation, Central Church of Christ, and invited O. H. to serve as their minister. He continued with the congregation for seven more years before retiring from the active preaching ministry.

O. H.'s spiritual influence by no means ceased, however. A number of individuals in the U. S. and in Canada sought his advice, and were drawn to his mature and caring character. In the last few years his contribution in the Church of Christ in Lewiston, New York, where he worshiped, was greatly appreciated.

In February of 1977 he delivered the Winter Lectures at Ontario Christian Seminary in Toronto, a theological institution of our brethren in the Christian Church. The series of lectures was entitled "The Impossible Dream" and treated the concern for the individual in the message of the Old Testament prophets, O. H.'s favorite biblical witnesses. A forum planned for May of this year with Leroy Garrett in Toronto, designed to bring into discussion the various factions of the Restoration Movement in Canada, will suffer his loss.

Intellectually stimulating and spiritually rewarding to its members was his participation in a theological study group which has met monthly over the past two years in the homes of its participants in southern Ontario and New York. In the week just prior to his fatal accident O. H. had led the study group in the discussion of Hans Küng's recent book, *On Being a Christian*, giving us once more an example of his mature reflection.

He never claimed to be a scholar, but in him I have found a unique example of reflective living and helpful wisdom. O. H. persistently encouraged us to see the complexity of human and world problems. In theological concerns he challenged us to take into account the discoveries of science and the rich experience of culture. In our quest for religious and human truths, O. H.'s presence will remain with us as our disturbing conscience.

# Worthy of God?

By O. H. TALLMAN

Scores of denominations in Christendom maintain their separateness at the dictate of conscience. Although they are aware of Jesus' prayer for unity and sensitive to its plea, they cannot in conscience surrender something they believe to be the divine will in order to become a formal part of a universal or ecumenical church body.

The fact of their separateness does not indicate indifference to God's will, but rather concern over it. Church history reveals that most of these groups became separated from the parent group because of their different conviction. Either they withdrew from what they considered an apostate group or else were viewed as heretics by the parent group.

In many cases the new sects were born at the price of great pain and sacrifice. If they were not the victims of church and social ostracism or persecution, they had to endure the breach of fellowship and family bonds to be true to their faith. If there are those among them today who do not know the reason for their separateness, there were those in the beginning who *did* know at the price of suffering and sometimes death.

It is an injustice to represent the divided state of Christendom as a monument to indifference to God's will. It is the very opposite. It is a witness that often men were willing to hazard much to be true to their faith. It is at the same time evidence that informed, conscientious, devout men could not agree on what God's will was. They did what they thought they had to do. Thereafter each thought the hope for Christian unity lay in the dissolution of the other groups. This attitude on the part of each seemed to be no less serious even when more than a hundred groups were each calling on the others to dissolve, each thinking that the divine will was that it alone survive. Ludicrous as this

seems, it underscores the seriousness with which each viewed its separate existence and faith.

But such a ridiculous state of claim and counterclaim could not go on indefinitely without thoughtful leaders beginning to ask, "If their claim seems to me ridiculous, may not my claim seem ridiculous to them, and may not all our claims appear ridiculous to others and to God? If in a hundred contesting points of view each claims exclusive divine sanction, and each claims that it alone is approved by the Bible, then every last one had better do some humble soul-searching and some very serious, exhaustive study, analysis, and evaluation of its faith."

Some of the leaders of denominationalism set themselves to this discipline. They began to see how Bible students came to have divergent views of Scripture's meaning, how a thousand forces conditioned people to this conviction or that preoccupation, to this emphasis or that observance; how persons of virtually equal competence, devotion, and studious application to Scripture taught divergent and conflicting messages. It was a humbling experience in that one could not lightly credit himself with virtue, intelligence, or insight in a degree that would set him apart from all these devout men.

One of the beneficial results was that some of these leaders began to see themselves and their churches in their true personal and historical perspective. This led to a diminishing of the tendency of each denomination to think of itself as the true or only body of Christ. They came to see that some of the things responsible for their separateness were, after all, not things that could be seriously considered matters of prime concern to God. As a consequence they could now in good conscience consider relinquishing some of these things that had

been traditional with them in order to move toward unity with other bodies of Christendom. This made possible talk among them of a universal or ecumenical church that they hoped would be in larger measure a response to Christ's prayer for unity.

Some have wrongly imagined that the budding ecumenical movement was possible in our generation only because the churches no longer had any convictions. It is possible rather because there has been an admission of the sin of division and a willingness to accept individually part of the responsibility for this sin. On the part of many there is a real spirit of humility and penitence for blindness, and sectarian-spirited self-righteousness that has torn Christendom.

Talk of unity is possible also because after centuries in which Christianity has emphasized those things that separate it, it has at long last begun to talk about things that are common to the faith and spirit of most. It has begun to ask if its parts cannot more fully find and exemplify the spirit and will of Christ. It is beginning to ask most seriously what the Christian church is. It may be stimulated to inquire most fervently about the church's message from God to the world; the great concerns for which

things are important concerns of God.

In the Churches of Christ disputes over means, procedures, mechanics and form of congregational worship, support of church-related institutions, details of organizational form, what part of a man's life is his church life and what part is merely Christian or secular, (particularly with regard to the spending of his money), and many other things unworthy of us are fastened unduly on us by man-made modes of interpreting Scripture, or by fallacious suppositions, or by a distorted sense of values. And this sometimes is done to a pitiful neglect of the great concerns worthy of us and of God.

Although it may be comforting, and may eliminate any feeling of need to investigate our faith thoroughly, it is folly to suppose that we alone of all concerned religious people in the world have the only objective approach to Scripture that gives us alone the understanding of God's will. The man in the asylum who believes he is God may be highly incensed if one does not agree with his estimate of himself; but his outraged feelings only indicate his unwillingness or incapacity to question his estimate of himself.

It is much more commendable and sane to join

**The unfolding of the infinity of wonders in God's vast universe  
makes it inconceivable that thoughtful people will become preoccupied with  
things that are unworthy even of themselves and imagine that these  
things are important concerns of God.**

Christ gave his life; what he hoped thereby to create; what he hoped to commit to men thereby; the grand truth worthy of the Almighty's concern and the Savior's life; what the church is to be; and what it is to do in the world to be worthy of this.

These questions are of great importance. One cannot read the record of the infinite variety of the causes of dispute and division in the history of the church without being convinced that ever so many of these things were not worthy even of human concern, let alone divine concern. One is impressed that the only reason men became embroiled over them was that they were victims of systems of interpreting Scripture that made them quibblers over things that they should normally have recognized were not worthy of discussion.

In our century surely we must be impressed by the superlative majesty of God. The unfolding of the infinity of wonders in his vast universe must, as we glimpse them, fill us with awe at least to equal what Isaiah felt as he beheld God in the temple. It seems inconceivable, then, that thoughtful people will become preoccupied with things that are unworthy even of themselves and imagine that these

the human race. Those leaders among us who have the grace to walk humbly, and who have the means at hand have the responsibility to study intently and objectively what our particular approach to Scripture is, what suppositions we bring to this study, the fallible human reasoning we sometimes try to bind on men as though our inferences were as authoritative as God's own voice. It is hoped that the day of our cradle innocence is behind us when we asserted that we did not interpret Scripture, but simply accepted what it said.

But those of us who are not leaders with the sharp instruments of history and logic need not think we are therefore hopelessly at sea when it comes to discerning Scripture's message. The greatest aids to understanding are an inquisitive, open mind, and a sense of values activated by some appreciation of God. A helpful guide in evaluating what is presented for our consideration as the will of God is to ask the simple question, "Is this worthy of God?" This is a question the world frequently asks, and properly so. If we do not ask it, we may appear, and be, ridiculous in the eyes of God and men alike.



That many in the church are occupied with "tiddlywinks" when their hearts and hands should be dedicated to the worthy things is quite apparent. That sensitive men will defend their playing "tiddlywinks" with many proof texts indicates how tragically their natural sense of values can be frustrated because they are victims of a false notion of "scripturalness" or an erroneous or traditional method of interpretation.

In Romans, Paul reminded the Jews that they were causing the name of God to be blasphemed because of their immorality and hypocrisy. The church sometimes causes a related reaction. Because of its misplaced emphases men say, "If these are the matters of prime concern with God, I am afraid he does not interest me." Sensitive, thoughtful, searching men are turned away from the church because its preoccupations often are so unworthy of God. In rhetorical language Paul evidenced his abounding thrill and pride in the gospel when he said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power unto salvation."

No one ever need be ashamed of the gospel. Every Christian who has an appreciable grasp of what it really is ought to experience a profound thrill over it like Paul did. But how many are gratified and elated over the message they hear? How many glory at its beautiful and powerful relevance to life? And, what is probably more important, how many are thrilled by their fellow Christians who should be a living, inspiring testament to the gospel? How many are thrilled by the concerns that are the church's, by its insights, by its thirst for a more adequate appreciation of Christ's mission, by its

sensitively, appreciatively, creatively to other people? Do we possess enough love ourselves that our relationship with others tends in measure to commit to them release from fear and loneliness? Does each person we meet stand a little straighter because he is made to feel our faith in his human dignity? Do we impart to him our appreciation of the privilege we feel at having had the association? Since people are objects of divine love, we should cherish every association possible with anyone God loves. We should anticipate our own enrichment thereby; we should hope for creative and even redemptive results.

Jesus frequented the homes of publicans and sinners, carrying with him the good will of God and often imparting to them the curative and redeeming love of God. He was no condescending do-gooder stooping to an association with inferior beings. He was the strong Son of God going to other children of God with a knowledge of their potential, with an appreciation of them in spite of their sin. Jesus' acceptance of them, his genuinely loving them was, no doubt, the spark that struck fire and bore them in responsive love to God.

When Jesus saw Zacchaeus, he called out for all to hear that he was going home with him. Zacchaeus' occupation was that of the disreputable publican. But Zacchaeus was a child of God about whom Jesus was glad to proclaim his intended association. This was an act of courage. It was an act of good will. It was a declaration, too, that people had their values wrong. That Zacchaeus was a child of God was a greater reality and therefore a greater consideration than that he sinned. The fact that he

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vibrant, God-breathed life full of humanitarian concern, ennobled by the Christian view of man's dignity, encouraged by the perspective of optimism, dignified by the great commission to universal brotherhood, graced by the patience of love, inspired by the irrepressible march of God's purpose, and filled with the dignity of service?

How many breathe the truth of God's divine initiative of love? How many have a worthy view of, and a sound relationship with, God that enables us to love him with our "whole heart, soul, mind, and strength"? Do we see him infinitely worthy of loving so that our life with him eradicates fear, dispells guilt, diminishes pain, and banishes loneliness? Do we characteristically relate ourselves personally,

was a child of God dictated that Jesus seek an association with him. The fact that he was a sinner only meant that he in some special degree needed love. The story seems to indicate that Jesus' courageous public acceptance of the man, and his evident concern and love, quickly warmed him to penitence, generosity, and salvation.

Almost without number is the host of people today who are ostracized, segregated, or discriminated against for no fault of their own. But loneliness, guilt, fear, and pain are their companions just as surely as if all of these things had been the products of their personal sin. But whether through personal sin or through being victimized by a sinning society, there are millions of Zacchaeuses hungry for accep-



tance, dying for want of love, lonely because there are no courageous servants of Jesus to cry out in a public way, "I am going home with you!" There are as many who need to be washed of shame, hatred, tension, resentment, cynicism, and dark passion by the administration of a sensitive person's genuine love. Repentance waits for the goodness of God, but how hard for this goodness to penetrate a person's world that seems to be primarily hostile or unconcerned. How seldom the goodness of God is impressed on those from whom society or the church withdraws in disdain, or merely neglects! The prodigal son, though prodigal, was still the beloved son. The lost sheep, though lost, was the object of concern and action.

Jesus' mission was to people. He came to seek and to save the lost. His church's mission must be to people—where they are, what they are. Sensitive, hopefully, lovingly, creatively, it must go with the assurance that the person has an essential dignity, a potential for life, a heart that can be tendered. The Christian should go with the expectation of mutual enrichment in an association with a fellow of like frailties, but of life potential. One will likely intuitively know if another looks down on him, and once he feels he is neither respected nor loved, he realizes he will not truly be served. The superior feeling person does not serve others. He

uses them and subtly deceives himself that he is serving.

A child of God warmed by the spirit of Christ's fellowship cannot coolly or aloofly relate himself to another person. Rapport on the Christian level must be based on evaluating man highly and dealing with him as a sovereign son of God beloved of the Father, dignified by this status, and potentially worthy of the dignity. Such a view of our fellow-man creates anticipation for association, dissipates fear in the relationship and generates the beginning of the infinite potential of love.

In view of the greatness of the Christian challenge and the magnificence of its creative fruits, can we be content to wall ourselves in church buildings, compliment ourselves on the propriety of our doctrine and morals, invite similar respectable people to join our ranks, concern ourselves with building funds, attendance records, procedural fastidiousness, religious exclusiveness, parochial indoctrination, social status-quoism, and the like, and neglect the lonely human treasures whose spirits shrivel in the climate of cold unconcern?

Do you see God's concern to be greater than this? Is the heart of Jesus commendable portrayed in such a church? Will it melt the fearful, desolate, groping anguished hearts of our day? Will it deliver to them the abounding life, the great salvation? †

# what kind of sunlight?

—Lisa Moore

*What kind of sunlight is it  
that leaves the rocks so cold?  
that strains the light  
through flat cathedral men in pictures  
in walls  
and counts the people parting air?  
The fever in the choir is there;  
a feeding—full  
as my bones, toes  
pink and healthy  
staring into flowers  
singing the next verse  
so full,  
full enough for my mother to pinch or pat  
so full  
there is no room  
no more to laugh  
I watch my father from the back  
he sings—the blue strained light  
is gold and spreading into steps.*

# Morals, Faith, and Christian Growth

By REID C. LANCASTER

*"But doesn't the existence of grace make you see that men and women are equal in every respect?" questions A.*

B is quick to reply, *"How can you say that, after hearing what Paul says quite clearly?"*

*"Stifle them. It's better to be safe than sorry," encourages C.*

D can remain quiet no longer: *"But we've already argued that first century Jewish culture plays a big part in Paul's attitude."*

How often have we experienced churches engaging in heated discussions that have sounded much like the dialogue above! It seems as though we will never be rid of such arguing. This is the stuff that splits churches and wounds their members for a lifetime.

Some insight into why we argue as we do is available from Lawrence Kohlberg, a Harvard professor renowned for his research in moral development. It may be that by examining his work we can understand why we so often fail to reach agreement.

Kohlberg's theory is that all mankind develops through different moral stages. The discussion above, like all church arguments, is a reflection of each person's moral or ethical decisions regarding a particular issue. How we respond depends on the ethical/moral stance we take; or, as Kohlberg would put it, how we respond depends at which stage of moral development we reside.

The chart on page 18 gives a sketch of Kohlberg's stages and examples of typical responses in each stage. After you have familiarized yourself with his structure, we'll continue with a discussion of the ground rules of this developmental approach to morals.

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*Reid C. Lancaster has served as minister of education at Duncanville, Texas, and Wichita, Kansas. He now lives in Abilene, Texas.*

## THE DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

We must first acknowledge that moral development is a *cognitive* process. Kohlberg's stages are levels of moral reasoning and are correlated to one's cognitive development. Our cognitive development, and therefore our moral development, can be stimulated or discouraged by our physical and social environment.

Essential to understanding movement through Kohlberg's stages is a set of characteristics of the developmental approach that has been reinforced by his research.

- (a) *Stage development is invariant.* One must progress through the stages one at a time without skipping stages. The levels are hierarchical, and movement is normally in only one direction.
- (b) *Subjects can comprehend moral reasoning at only one stage beyond their own.* To appeal to stage 5 reasoning in a child at stage 2 is useless. That's what makes most of Jesus' sayings incomprehensible to pre-school children. A child at stage 2 might conceive of being good to conform with authority (stage 3), but to appeal to him on the basis of justice (stage 5 or 6) is beyond him.
- (c) *Subjects are cognitively attracted to reasoning one level above their own.* Moralizing at a higher level can begin to be cognitively more adequate and eventually resolve a dilemma more satisfactorily.
- (d) *Movement occurs when cognitive disequilibrium is created.* When one's outlook is not adequate to cope with a particular moral dilemma, one is driven to resolve that mental conflict. That usually provides the motivation needed to move up a stage. If one is *not* challenged cognitively to the point of dissatisfaction with one's own reasoning, no movement will occur.
- (e) *One stage's mentality tends to permeate all areas of life.* If one's interpersonal relationships are influenced by stage 4 thinking, then one's business ethics are usually based on stage 4. (However, in some cases, one might operate



a business on stage 5 principles and see religion from a stage 4 stance.)

### A CLOSER LOOK AT EACH STAGE

Kohlberg's original writings lacked any mention of stage 0, but others have agreed that the absence of any moral reasoning ability in infants be acknowledged; therefore, stage 0.

Stage 1 is easily recognized as we see young children's view of their parents—large and powerful and

able to apply punitive measures against anything that displeases them. We've all been distraught to see those little angels evolve into tyrants as they move into stage 2. Here, the need to please one's self overrides the punishment that once prevented the offense. Now they will risk the punishment to satisfy self.

Ah, but then stage 3 showers its lovely fragrance over our families. The child at this stage is moti-

### PARAPHRASE OF KOHLBERG'S STAGES WITH EXAMPLES

Levels	Stages	Typical response regarding love of enemies (Lk. 6:27)	Typical response regarding the "gay" issue
Amoral	0— <i>Pre-conceptual</i> —A child begins, of course, with a disposition of life that precedes any ability to make moral decisions.		
Pre-conventional	1— <i>Punishment/obedience orientation</i> —All attempts are made to avoid punishment due to the awesome power of the reigning authority; not a respect for authority, but a native, selfish concern for one's self.	Love your enemies because you'll get a spanking if you don't.	Don't mess around with people of the same sex because you might get caught.
	2— <i>Instrumental-relativist orientation</i> —Rightness is what instrumentally satisfies one's own needs, and sometimes another's needs if that pleases one; a "be good to me and I'll be good to you" attitude void of any loyalty, gratitude, or justice.	Love your enemies and they will do nice things for you.	If it feels good, do it.
Conventional	3— <i>Good boy/nice girl orientation</i> —One wins approval by being nice. Behavior is determined by an attitude of conformity.	Love your enemies like the preacher does.	Homosexuality is not socially acceptable. I would never submit to it.
	4— <i>Law and order orientation</i> —Authority, fixed rules and the maintenance of social order is the norm. Duty and respect for that structure is seen as good.	Love your enemies because the Bible says so.	Homosexuality is against American law, and violators should be prosecuted.
Post-conventional (Principled level)	5— <i>Social contract/legalistic orientation</i> —Morals are determined by respect for individual rights that are democratically agreed upon. Each contract is guarded but one is open to changing the contract when agreed upon again.	Love your enemies because this is the policy deemed best by mutual agreement.	The gay movement is growing strong. Maybe we should change our legal system to provide for their equal rights.
	6— <i>Universal/ethical principle orientation</i> —The individual's morals are self-chosen standards of universality and consistency. These are principles for behavior and are therefore abstractions regarding universal justice, equality of human rights, and respect for the dignity of human beings.	Love your enemies because, like all people, they are worthy of your love.	Gays are still people even if we've not chosen that kind of life for ourselves. Love and concern for the homosexual is what is needed.

vated by an overwhelming desire to please the status quo. These cute little Cub Scouts and Brownies go to all extremes to please, and are crushed by any authoritative put-down. This attitude evolves into stage 4's law and order orientation. It is here that respect and reverence for a legal system become the governing rule.

Research has shown that most American adults remain in stages 3 or 4 (conventional level). Adults in these stages are extremely loyal to law, whether political or religious. That could explain a couple of things about conservative religion. Conventional thinkers take a very legal approach to the Bible and maintain all church structures in accordance with biblical precedent. The *doctrine* of grace is possibly adopted here, but the *spirit* of grace is inconceivable, causing a type of works/grace mixture.

Stage 5 opens the subject to principled thinking which frees one from blind legalism to the reasoning beyond law. This stage is based on agreements in interpersonal relationships which create mutually desirable situations. These contracts are religiously upheld; but it is the idea of the contract that is sacred, not the terms of the agreement. When the contract fails to meet needs, it is scrapped for a better agreement (e.g. the U. S. Constitution was formed on stage 5 reasoning).

The stage 6 person shapes his thinking around universal principles of human equality. The contracts of stage 5 are superfluous since each person is viewed in the highest regard. Social contracts with their demands on other's behavior are not required.

I think Kohlberg's stages can throw light on the conflict between Paul and James, which has often troubled me. James is a book based on conventional thinking—stages 3 and 4—while Romans exemplifies principled thinking—stages 5 and 6 (e.g. James 2:13-24 and Romans 3:21-4:15). James emphasizes the works manifestation of faith, while Paul simply speaks of the principles underlying faith. (Romans 14 is a textbook case of a stage 5's appeal to other stage 5 people to accept conventional thinkers' theology on the principle of love.)

Look again at the argument in the introduction of this article. Four statements were made from four different viewpoints. Test your ability to assign a stage to each statement. A reasoned from stage 6, B from stage 4, C from stage 3, and D from stage 5.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANKIND

I've always been fascinated by the concept of comparing the development of mankind to the development of a human being. Moral development, as Kohlberg sees it, has a curious parallel to the way God has developed his own people morally.

Mankind experienced its amoral stage in the gar-

den with no clear sense of right and wrong. After partaking of the forbidden fruit, we were thrown into the world knowing fully the punitive power of the Almighty. That power was reinforced several times in the Patriarchal period (e.g. the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah).

But God wanted mankind to develop. Hence, he gave the Law. Conventional thinking was encouraged, leaving the pre-conventional period inadequate. Eventually, Jesus' "strange," principled reasoning became quite a stumbling block to mankind. But to those who were able to move to stage 5 and 6, it became a great new solution to the God-man conflict.

Of course, principled reasoning was suggested before Christ came, but it wasn't taken well. The prophets encouraged a changed heart rather than dead ritualistic sacrifice; but David's eating of the showbread really gave theological grief to some. Also, it's clearer now to see why David was "a man after God's own heart"—because he was a principled thinker, not because he was sinless.

Principled reasoning was not officially endorsed until Jesus' teaching fulfilled and eliminated Jewish law. Think of the occasions when Jesus confronted his stage 4 opponents with his principled reasoning: he picked grain on the sabbath, he healed on the sabbath, he communed with sinners, and he questioned the idea of "unclean" foods.

To have the mind of Christ is not to accept a different system of beliefs, but to develop a whole new way of thinking. Christian living at its ultimate is principled reasoning fully realized. Without this level of moral development grace remains another legal system and not a way of life.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

What a shame that we western Christians have begun to baptize children at such an early age. "I felt like it was the thing to do" is the stage 3 reasoning I hear so much, only to be questioned as one enters stage 4 and maybe again at stage 5. The unanswered question, however, is how do we de-escalate this progress without destroying all our young children?

One interesting observation of Kohlberg's theory regards the law/grace problem. It becomes apparent that one must become a proponent of the law system before grace can be conceived. In other words, we have to teach our kids a law ethic before we begin to teach grace!

Christian education, then, becomes the task of moving one upward through the stages toward more meaningful solutions to ethical dilemmas. Curriculum molded around moral development, *causing*



*ethical disequilibrium to be resolved at higher levels, would be the order.*

The discoveries Kohlberg has made about human growth opens up Christian educators to a brand new arena. Now we have a ruler with which to measure Christian growth among our people. Now we have new personal goals to aim for in our own lives. Christian growth is now seen as a lifelong process of development. We must counter the fact that research shows that most Americans, and therefore many of our church folk, are still conventional thinkers. These findings put a new emphasis on adult education, as well as bringing insight to the moral education of our children.

## FORUM

### Correction

As I read my response to "A Parable of the Church" (April issue, p. 19), I felt something was wrong. I checked my original and found that some very important words were deleted. The printed statement said that "You have been content with a self-made righteousness. . . from the very presence of my throne." Obviously this is a falsehood: self-made righteousness does *not* come from God but from man. The statement should have read, "You have been content with a self-made righteousness *rather* than a righteousness . . . from the very presence of my throne. . . ."

Janeta Fong  
Sinclair, Maine

*We regret the error, and appreciate the correction—Ed.*

### More Like That, Dave

In my opinion, Dave Wimbish should *stay* off the back pew, and give us more articles like the one on Ruth Carter Stapleton. This seems to be a much more constructive use of his humor and analytic abilities.

This might be an object lesson to many of us—look how the Lord can use us if we quit sitting on the back row muttering sarcastic comments to the person beside us, and instead get out "where the action is". . . .

Mary Pittard  
San Antonio, Texas

### KOHLBERG'S STAGE SEVEN

Kohlberg's research has seemingly had an impact on his own development. I think simply knowing what it is one could be reaching for causes a discontent for one's present position. Kohlberg has done some thinking toward a stage seven that appears to him in rather vague terms. He describes it as a philosophical approach to a type of cosmic consciousness, rather than the universal emphasis of stage 6.

Kohlberg's feeling of inadequacy in secular moral development turns us to research done by a Christian, Dr. James W. Fowler III, in *faith* development. Fowler's work will be discussed in Part II of this article. †

### Woman and Other Slaves

Your recent article, "Women and Authority: How It Worked Where I Lived" (February issue) reminded me of a similar incident at our little church down here on The Plantation.

Being a mainline church that is loyal and faithful to the Old Paths, we have always followed the scriptural principle of strict segregation regarding those who have the "curse of Cain."

You can imagine, therefore, the sense of revulsion which I felt recently when I discovered that some of our younger folk were using our church building on Tuesday nights for a Bible study that was not only unauthorized but which was also *integrated*! My first impulse was to horsewhip the whole bunch, but feeling that would be inappropriate behavior for an elder of the church, I decided to take a more subtle approach.

I contacted the ringleader, who happens to be one of those "sensitive" school teacher types, and told him I had heard about his Bible study and intended to attend the next session. Well, no words could ever fully describe the sense of anguish I felt as I sat through that "Bible study" the next Tuesday evening. Darkies were right there in the same room with the "pride of the South." They even held hands in a circle and allowed the Darkies to participate in "chain-prayers." Even more astonishing—and I know this will be hard to believe—the Darkies led the group in the singing of several "Negro spirituals"!

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, I was called upon to make some remarks. With my voice quivering with emotion, I struggled to express my concerns in a calm and restrained

manner. I reviewed the Scripture's clear teachings regarding segregation of the races and the inferiority of the colored people. I then emphasized Ephesians 6:5—"Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling." I pointed out that this verse means that for slaves there is an additional step in God's plan of salvation: namely, that slaves must show absolute submission toward their masters. I concluded by asking them to study the book of Philemon and then report back to me within three weeks.

Well, praise the Lord, it took only two weeks! After only one study session on Philemon they saw the light, and the following Sunday the white folks in the group came forward and confessed their faults in this matter. Old Bro. Amos, the colored preacher, took the confessions of the errant Darkies that same morning (outside on the lawn, of course—under the big elm tree, where they usually meet).

So, as you can see, a potentially explosive matter ended beautifully, due to the Christ-like restraint that was shown by all involved. (Although I must admit in all candor that I had to threaten our white preacher with his job in order to keep him from "blasting" the group from the pulpit before the Holy Ghost had a chance to convict them of their error.)

I just don't know what will happen next if we don't put the axe to the root of these liberal trends that are undermining "the faith once delivered." About the only thing I can think of that would be more radical would be for some false teacher to come along advocating that our lady folks be allowed to ask questions in Bible class or pray in the Assembly! Heaven forbid! I don't even want to think about it.

Yours in the Lord,  
Simon Legree



# BOOKS

By Bobbie Lee Holley

*I Came to Love You Late*, by Joyce Landorf (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1977), 221 pp. \$8.95.

Reviewed by Carole Gottlich, a member of the Sandy Springs Church of Christ in Atlanta. (Though she claims to be a "Martha," I have often found her sitting, as Mary, at the Master's feet—BLH.)

To the Marthas  
everywhere who were  
"cumbered with much serving"  
and who now move in freedom  
and yet still serve.  
(The Dedication)

And the Word became man and  
lived for a time among us,  
and we viewed His glory. . . .  
(John 1:14)

The words that we have from the Holy Spirit of what *did* happen have been laced in and out of what *might* have been, to create this tender and loving story of Martha, Jesus' friend from Bethany. Joyce Landorf takes us back to the small Israeli village of 1,900 years ago, and we become a part of the drama of everyday living.

*I played on the hillsides and in the coolness of the day in the favorite places where Martha played.*

*I was kind and attentive to Lazarus because he was not a healthy child.*

*I felt the security of the home where Martha grew up. . . the love that was shared.*

*I was there when the Rabbi and neighbors came to share the day. . . the sense of God was everywhere.*

*I helped nurse some through the night . . . or at least I wanted to. . . and to help prepare the meals and taste the dried fruit in the baskets.*

*I found Martha alone at times. . . resting and being quiet. . . and I wanted to share her thoughts in the stillness. Martha grew up and I grew up with her. . . .*

*I was there. . . and how my heart ached . . . when she realized that Lazarus was dying. We were on the rooftop.*

*God, like "a thief in the night," had in past years stolen her mother, her father, her gentle bridegroom and*

*now he was stealing her brother. I held her hand and felt her anguish because she did not know what to do. . . Martha did not know what to do. . . She had done all she knew to do. . . .*

So often I have identified with Martha when Mary was receiving all the roses. I have been anxious and have wanted to cry out, "Oh, please save at least one rose for Martha!" I have often struggled with the scene of Jesus and his followers coming to Martha's house to eat and enjoy her food—and I can imagine how those hungry men ate—and to find rest in the peace and comfort of her home. I've wanted to say, "Don't be so critical of her. Don't you know how creative and busy she's been to make your stay nicer?" So it warms my heart when Joyce Landorf brings God's men back to our talented Martha in genuine concern for her as a person. There were times when the men, too, did not understand or see the spiritual lessons. In that limbo of ripening, Martha never threatened them in her questioning and doubting and bitter-sweetness of growing.

We all have a little of Martha in us. Look at all those who are busy this very day. Remember all the times that *things had to be done*. Think of those who are actively aware of their responsibilities. . . a friend nursing a sick child. . . another caring for an elderly parent. . . one concerned for a grieving heart. I have missed letters from one who has been busy editing a cookbook and from another back at work for awhile. They are discerning women and they know *who* has made them whole and complete. They are open for the gift that our friend Martha had to receive.

We never grow beyond the need, and sometimes we stumble over the wanting it before we understand—just as Martha did. And, then, we feel so

late. Knowing that Jesus brings the wholeness, we can entertain the song in our hearts as Martha finally could because we know we are free. No longer is there the burden of being so good and so busy. This is a wonderful thing for a doer to know, and Martha was a doer! Martha was late and Jesus waited. I believe the author knows what it is to be late, and she knows the wonder of the One who waits in understanding and selfless love. For us, too, he has waited.

Eventually we know that God had a plan for Martha's life. And we feel deep within us that he has a plan for us. Mary and Martha are on their way to the tomb to anoint and tend to Jesus' body in a more careful and loving way than had been possible in the rush to bury him. They are rushing through the alleys on that early Sunday morning when something trips Martha. When she realizes what it is, she tells Mary to go on without her. She must return home to tend to the situation which she literally has found in her lap. Jesus comes to her later, knowing in detail what has happened. He confirms in her heart that her work is his work and that he was behind it all. She has come to love him late, but he has made up for all the delay and taken it into his eternal purpose.

*I was there when Aaron and Jude came bursting into the house: "Jesus is coming here."*

*I watched as he turned aside into the hills. . . the very hills where I had played with Martha. . . and I joined the crowd that followed him.*

*I hung on his few brief words and watched in amazement as he "ascended. . . in a cloud of glory above the green-carpeted hills of Bethany."*

*I heard his promise. . . I saw him wave . . . I stood with her "gazing up into the heavens long after he had gone."*

*We returned to home and responsibility.*

Joyce Landorf, thank you for the big, beautiful bouquet for the Marthas from heaven's florist. The card has touched me deeply. As I heard you speak recently, dressed in your lovely peasant skirt and blouse and boots, your spirit called forth mine. I had to hurry away, but I meant it when I touched your arm and said, "I love you." I love you for helping me to understand that Jesus waits, no matter how late we come to love him, and that the service of the Marthas is his work too. Since it is in relationship that we know and are known, I am looking forward to a visit with Martha . . . someday. And with you too. Joyce Landorf. †



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# ←CROSS CURRENTS→

DO CHRISTIAN COLLEGES  
PROMOTE HIGHER VALUING?

The Christian college, which exists in part to communicate Christian values, is frequently criticized on that score from two polar parties. It is attacked from the right for not being stricter (this, usually from parents who had hoped the college would do a better job of value-training than did the home). From the left comes the opposite criticism: the rules are too many and too strict.

A common way of dealing with this kind of pressure is simply to take into grave consideration the clout of the complainer. Policy is left at the mercy of threats to withhold funds, or promises to come through. Some administrators admit openly that the way they know whether they are doing a good job is whether both the right and the left grumble some.

I suspect that thoughtful people on both the right and the left would respond to more reasoned approaches that show administrators had done their homework on how moral and ethical values are transmitted. To be Christian, a college must be concerned not merely with the number and/or the latitude of its rules, but with Christian *methods* of making value choices. Our institutions should help develop students' capacity to make their own moral decisions instead of merely defending this or that specific of a moral code.

Although it is not explicitly Christian, Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development (see page 17) provide one model of the kind of homework we need. Against knee-jerk liberals who resist all rules, Kohlberg's research shows that we do not leap into altruistic ethics without going through an obey-the-rules stage. Against the legalists, these studies also show that hide-bound conservatism actually retards moral development.

Church of Christ-related colleges have surely erred in the latter direction. Pressure from the right has led these institutions to center their attention on thou-shalt-nots. Many re-

quire incoming students to sign a kind of contract agreeing to abide by rules which they had no part in making (even though many are legally adults). The difficulty, according to Kohlberg's research, is that this kind of external-legal approach to values *often halts further moral development*. A person whose values are legally prescribed may feel released from giving further thought to the valuing process. Kohlberg warns that the truly moral position—valuing the right because of its inherent rightness without regard to consequence—is forever closed to the person bound only by rules (shades of Paul!).

Another difficulty is that supporters of the Christian college frequently insist, paradoxically, that the school function in the role of parent, but that it not challenge the moral standards previously learned. Their children are to be protected from having those standards confronted. Again from Kohlberg's work, this requirement also renders moral development impossible. Research shows that most students enter college doing right in order to please others, or out of self-interest. But no one progresses to doing right because it's right, or because that's the nature of God (see Lev. 11:44, etc.), *unless his lower-level valuing base is challenged*. Therefore to prohibit confrontation is to stifle growth.

Of course that sort of confrontation takes place anyway, eventually. And if students have not been so challenged in the framework of Christian values instead of pagan, they often either succumb to the pagans or react defensively and settle down at an adolescent level of valuing.

If our schools would move beyond mere legalism, and if they were free to stimulate progress in the valuing process, our students would not have to settle for either of these inadequate options.

—RD





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